

ABSTRACT

A form-fill-and-seal (FFS) packaging machine is described wherein a zipper is attached to the package simultaneously with the sealing operation at the sealing and evacuation station. The attached zipper is thereafter welded in place at the zipper welding and cutting station. A zipper blank feeder and a channel-forming die with an impulse sealer are integrated into the sealing die of a packaging machine forming a combination work station. The zipper is installed at an existing work station and shares the existing lifting device. This enables the retrofitting of an FFS packaging machine to include a zipper attachment function without changing the footprint thereof. The combination work station forms a channel for the zipper blank between the thermoformed web and the lidstock. While the sealing die is providing a seal about the lid, the impulse sealer in the channel-forming die attaches the zipper to an initial attachment portion of the packaging film. Upon completion of the package, this initial attachment portion, if retained, becomes the tamper-indication portion of the package. Both the sealing and evacuation station and the zipper welding stations of this invention are of jacketed construction enabling the temperature control of the zipper blank throughout the installation procedures.